

September 12, 1974

Mr. James J. Kilpatrick
White Walnut Hill
Woodville, Virginia 22749

Dear Mr. Kilpatrick:

I have had an opportunity to read your article entitled "Death on Sunday Night" from the September 11th edition of the "Washington Star-News" and I certainly appreciate the manner in which you called the attention of your readers to the information contained in the recently issued Uniform Crime Reports bulletin. Your analysis of the statistics and information contained therein was thorough and perceptive and painted a vivid picture of the crime problems facing this nation. Your remarks concerning the police officers slain were particularly noted and I certainly agree with your suggestion that an appropriate method should be found to honor these dedicated men who have given their lives in service to the public.

Sincerely yours,

Clarence M. Kelley
Clarence M. Kelley
Director

① - Washington Field - Enclosure

80-0-1042

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FBI - WASH. FIELD OFFICE	

crowd of several
hundred people
gathered in the
parking lot of the
hotel.

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Every September begins
from the FBI its Uniform
Crime Report. The tabulated
figures are assembled minutely,
row on row, as neatly as
troops, as silent as tomb-
stones. With orderly precision
they tell of disorder, violence
and death. Permit me to
speak of one figure only: 127.
That is the number of local,
county and state law enforce-
ment officers who were slain
last year in the line of duty. It
was the highest annual figure
ever recorded.

Director Clarence Kelley's
report is a bloodless, faceless,
computerized affair. Every
drop of emotion is drained
away. Its trace of drama re-
mains. Out of the punch-card
calculations, certain compen-
sating emotions emerge, but the
figures do not speak to our
senses. We do not hear the
screams, or sniff the danger, or
see a face contorted in fear or
rage. We have only the silent
calculations.

OVER THE PAST ten years,
680 officers have died from
criminal action. Of these, 613
have died from handguns. For

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no particular reason that
presents itself. Sunday nights
are the most dangerous times,
and the hours between 10 p.m.
and 2 a.m. are the most dan-
gerous hours. Most officers
are slain in robbery pursuit or
in attempting other arrests.
Last year saw 29 officers kil-
led in responding to "disturb-
ance calls." It is a shocking
reflection on our violent soci-
ety that 25 policemen were
killed as they made routine
traffic stops.

The composite image of the
dead officer indicates that he
was white (40 percent) were
black, 3 percent other races);
that he was in his late twenties
or early thirties (median po-
lice service, five and one-half
years); and that he most prob-
ably died on a regular patrol
duty in his squad car. Out of
the 127 slain last year, eleven
actually were off duty at the
time they died in the highest
tradition of law enforcement,
which holds that an officer of
the law is never "off duty."

WHO WOULD their killers?
All but six of last year's kill-
ings were cleared by arrest.

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Of the 192 officers killed
77 percent had prior criminal
records, 41 percent had previ-
ously been convicted and
released on parole or proba-
tion. Sixteen percent actually
were on parole or probation
when they were involved in
the killing of an officer.

The tabulations march on
and on, mutely antimetic,
but no vivid imagination is re-
quired to transform the short
facts to flesh and blood. There
were 127 men who died in the
police service; most of them
left widows and children be-
hind. The hard profession of
law enforcement demands that
officers risk their lives; there
127 risked, and lost.

Some appropriate method
should be found, it seems to
me, for the living not only to
honor those dead but also to
honor the profession in which
they served. Perhaps a de-
served reform could be ac-
tually taken to the White
House, the families of the slain
officers, there to receive
medals in recognition. If such
a ceremony were held in con-
junction with Law Day, the

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After 1973 approach a sug-
gestion in a bill sponsored
chiefly by Sen. John Stennis
of Mississippi and Sen. Dan
Rostenkowski of Illinois. The bill
has passed both House and
Senate, in different versions,
but has been languishing since
last April for want of further
action. It would provide for
500,000 a memorial fund to
the families of both police and
firemen killed by felonious ac-
tion, or by accident in the line
of duty.

The McClellan-Flanagan bill
would cost an estimated \$10
million a year. It is a large
sum, perhaps more than
an obligation of honor from a
law-enforcement profession
that is a debt to society
rest, for the law is a
moral debt to society. It is
the of justice that we
in life, in some fashion, we
ought to have them. It is
served law and justice. It is
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